

**AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
ROOM 803, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA  
THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2010, 11:00 A.M.**

**Voting Members present:**

Deke Copenhaver, Mayor of Augusta – **Chairman**  
Fred Cavanaugh, Mayor of Aiken  
Skip Grkovic (representing Lark Jones, Mayor, North Augusta)  
Ulysses Mitchell (representing Vance Smith, GA DOT Commissioner)  
C. H. Williams, Mayor of Burnettsville

**Voting Members absent:**

George James, Mayor of Grovetown  
Tom Cobb, Mayor of Blythe  
Henry Taylor, SC – 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District Commissioner, ½ vote  
Charles Dalton, SC – 3<sup>rd</sup> District Highway Commissioner, ½ vote  
Robert Buchwitz, Chairman Hephzibah Commission  
Ronnie Young, Chairman, Aiken County Council  
John Curry (representing Col John Holwick – Fort Gordon)  
Ron Cross, Chairman, Columbia Co. Commission – **Vice- Chairman**

**Others Present (N = Nonvoting Member)**

**Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission**

Paul DeCamp  
Lynn Russell  
Marya Moultrie  
Juriah Lewis

**GA DOT**

Reuben Woods  
Vonda Everett  
Cissy McNure

**City of Augusta**

David Griffith

**LSCOG**

Rich Eberle

**Columbia County**

Matt Schlachter  
Don Barrow  
Steve Exley

**City of Aiken**

Sandra Korbelik

**FHWA**

Brandon Buckner

**Aiken County**

Gerald Jefferson

**Other**

Susan McCord, Augusta Chronicle

**1. Election of Officers:**

**Chairman** - Mr. Cavanaugh nominated Mr. Copenhaver to serve as Chairman. Mr. Williams seconded. No other nominations were received. . The motion was approved unanimously.

**Vice-Chairman** - M .Copenhaver nominated Mr. Cross to serve as Vice-Chairman. Mr. Grkovic seconded. No other nominations were received. The motion was approved unanimously.

**2. Consider approval of the minutes of the Policy Committee meetings held on December 3, 2009.**

Mr. Williams moved to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2009 meeting. Mr. Mitchell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3. Ratify the email vote and approve minutes of the special called meeting of December 10, 2009.**

Mr. Cavanaugh moved to ratify the email vote and approve minutes of the special called meeting of December 10, 2009. Mr. Mitchell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**4. Ratify the email vote and approve minutes of the special called meeting of February 8, 2010.**

Mr. Grkovic moved to ratify the email vote and approve minutes of the special called meeting of February 8, 2010. Mr. Williams seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**5. Consider recommending approval of the Final FY 2011 UPWP.**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. In December, the draft Unified Planning Work Program was distributed. Since that time, the content of the UPWP was sent to the participating agencies for review. There were no significant comments received. Aiken County made a few minor edits to the narrative that did not affect any of the work elements. A ten page summary was included in the agenda package outlining each of the work elements in the UPWP and a budget for each. None of the budget amounts have changed from the draft. We are still working off the budget amounts from last year's UPWP budget. Since we have not received revised figures from GA DOT, there is a chance there may be some changes to the budget after final approval. Any changes will be brought back to you at that time if necessary. The major activities on or after July 1, 2010 will be the completing the Long Range Transportation Plan update, updating the TIP, increasing air quality education and outreach activities, and the annual update of the Congestion Management Study. In addition to the LRTP update, some of the ongoing special studies in Aiken County will either be carried on or completed during the next program year.

Mr. Mitchell moved to approve the final 2011 UPWP. Mr. Cavanaugh seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**6. Consider amending the ARTS Public Participation Plan by incorporating the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Process published by Georgia DOT in December 2009.**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. Currently our participation plan calls for a thirty-day review and comment period. The reason we are requesting the addition of this language was generated by a possibility there will be a second round of stimulus funding and there may be a short time frame in which to act on some of the funding available. This will be strictly limited to instances where a thirty-day review period might cause us to miss a critical deadline. Otherwise, in the vast majority of cases, the thirty-day review will be enforced.

Mr. Mitchell moved to approve this amendment to the Public Participation Plan. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**7. Status of ARRA Funded Projects.**

Mr. DeCamp presented the Georgia portion of this item. The state of Georgia was allocated monies to spend on eligible projects anywhere in the state. Of that funding, approximately \$21 million is going to projects in Richmond and Columbia Counties. In Richmond County there are six resurfacing projects and the widening of Alexander Drive. The Alexander Drive project should be let next week. The US 1 Deans Bridge Road resurfacing from near Fort Gordon to near the Jefferson County line project has been underway for a while.

In Columbia County the bridge construction over Euchee Creek on SR 223 is underway. The resurfacing projects will probably not get underway until the weather is a little better. All the projects have been awarded.

Of the \$8.5 million sub-allocated to the MPO, approximately \$5.5 million is going to nine resurfacing projects - five in Columbia County and four in Richmond County. A traffic signal and street light upgrade project on Broad Street in downtown Augusta accounts for the remainder of that funding. These projects are well on their way for final authorization by FHWA and we anticipate the resurfacing projects will go to bid within the next 2-3 weeks. The signal project will have a May letting date.

Mr. Jefferson presented the Aiken County portion of this item. The ARTS newsletter listed the ARRA projects for Aiken County.

The North Augusta projects are all resurfacing projects. The contract is expected to be let in March with a completion date of around October. In Aiken, the original scope was for drainage, streetscape and signal upgrades. The drainage and streetscape projects were deleted due to problems with meeting the time deadline for authorizing the project, leaving only signal projects. Signal systems will be upgraded on Whiskey Road, from Ola Hitt to Brookhaven, Drive. This contract will be let in April. One resurfacing project will be from Valley Road to York Street.

Both North Augusta and the City of Aiken received a share of the TMA allocation. They split the allocation 50/50, with each receiving \$1.4 million.

Mr. Lewis presented the Augusta Public Transit portion of this item. Augusta received \$2.7 million and Aiken County received \$657,000. Three 35-foot Goshen busses were ordered and they will be delivered in September. New fare boxes and bike racks will be installed on the APT fleet. GPS units have been ordered for the supervisor's vehicles. \$700,000 will be used for preventive maintenance. No operating funds have been received.

Mr. Eberle presented the Aiken County transit portion of this item. Part of the MSAA grant is being used to expand the building. AVL MBC units are being installed in the transit vehicles. As part of the TMCC project, BFE is in the final stages of updating their routing schedule and dispatch software to route match. This will increase the efficiency of the bus system and the Dial-a-Ride program. LSCOG is about to kick off the AVL MBC units in Orangeburg County, which is the first step in utilizing cutting-edge technology at LSCOG. New transit vehicles will be purchased and bus shelters will be erected in Aiken. LSCOG is working with the city of Aiken to identify potential shelter locations.

## **8. Status of Projects:**

### **(a) Georgia Highways**

Mrs. Everett presented this item. There are no major changes since the last update. The one project scheduled to be let in the next three months is the signal upgrade on Broad Street, which is scheduled to be let on May 21, 2010.

Project updates include:

- William Few Parkway Extension – The FONSI has been approved. Comments received from FHWA on the CLOMR are being addressed
- Flowing Wells Road Widening – The work on this project has stopped due to funding issues.
- Old Petersburg / Old Evans Road Widening – Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed. 202 of 284 parcels have been acquired.
- Wrightsboro Road Widening - Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed. 132 of 182 parcels have been acquired. Final Plans are 80% complete.
- I-520 from Gordon Highway to US 1 (Deans Bridge Road) – Right-of-way plans were approved last month.
- Windsor Spring Road Widening (Phases IV and V) – Right of way authorization is on hold until a Noise Study is redone.
- SR 28 at Laney-Walker Blvd. Ext. / Riverfront Drive Intersection Improvements - preliminary plans underway
- SR 56/Mike Padgett Hwy. Widening from Bennock Mill Road to Old Waynesboro Road - Environmental is underway.

### **(b) South Carolina Highways**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item.

- Silver Bluff Road widening - City officials and residents met in February to work out design issues involving the corridor improvements between Richardson Lake Road and Indian Creek Trail. Everyone has agreed to move forward with the final design.

### **(c) Augusta Public Transit**

Mr. Lewis presented this item. The Transit Development Plan was formally adopted by the Augusta Commission on Tuesday, March 2nd. This is a 191-page document prepared by Wilbur Smith and Associates. Some of the recommendations will not require a budget change. This plan gutted the system and started with new routes. They looked at all the traditional routes and proposed new routes and made recommendations for express and circular routes and to get out of neighborhoods.

The Board of Education and City officials have entered into an agreement to purchase 90 acres on Highway 56. The school bus department and Augusta Public Transit Administration and Maintenance operations will move to this location.

Six new Goshen brand paratransit vehicles have been delivered. They are loaded with mobile data transit equipment along with cameras. The elderly and ADA ridership is tremendous. Assisted living sites are built along a transit route to coincide with the paratransit system. Six paratransit buses are sent out daily.

Mayor Deke Copenhaver commented on House Bill 106 which could help APT. Rep Ron Stevens introduced this bill and it is being pushed by the Metro Atlanta Arts Council. This would be a penny sales tax to be approved by the voters. Twenty percent would go to fund arts and culture, which in Augusta would create \$3.5 million to go to arts and culture organizations. The rest of the funds could be put into transit or law enforcement. This would be left up to the individual municipalities to decide where the funds would go. The Metro Atlanta Arts Council would poll the community to see what the community felt like was the biggest funding need, so officials would know this going into any vote.

### **(d) Aiken County Transit**

Mr. Eberle presented this item. Saturday service has been eliminated due to budget cuts. LSCOG is looking at sustainability of the Best Friend Express by looking for outside support and revenue from other counties. We are looking at small ways to make the service more customer-friendly. There are funds in the budget for new shelters and LSCOG is working with the city of Aiken to identify potential shelter locations. To raise revenue, we are considering wrapping the buses with advertisements. We are utilizing everything from social networking, to Facebook and reaching out to individual businesses to get the word out that there is a good bus system in Aiken County

## **7. Update on Special Studies Projects:**

### **(a) ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan**

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. We are continuing to move forward on the LRTP with the consultant Wilbur Smith and Associates. The big push is the public meeting with the Environmental Justice

communities. Two public meeting are scheduled this month. One is in for March 9, 2010 at the Columbia County Municipal Building from 5 to 7 pm. And the other will be on March 16, 2010 from 5 to 7 at the Carrie Mays Life Center at 1014 Eleventh Avenue in Augusta. The meetings will be a drop-in format with a formal presentation at 6 pm. The push is to get more surveys completed. The Council on Aging in Aiken is helping with the surveys and the Regional Commission in Augusta is also going to help distribute the surveys. We are trying to get as much public comment as possible to see what the public wants for the ARTS area.

#### **(b) City of Aiken and Aiken Special Studies**

Mrs. Korbelik presented this item. The Northside study is back on schedule. This was delayed for modeling work.

The Dougherty Road study will not begin until summer.

Mr. Jefferson stated the RFPs for a consultant to prepare the US 1 Corridor study are due by the end of the month. Hopefully a selection can be made and consultant awarded with a contract by April. The Highway 19 Study is on hold until Aiken's Northside study is completed so the Highway 19 study can piggyback off of that one.

### **8. Update on Air Quality Initiatives**

#### **(a) Aiken County**

Mr. Grkovic stated North Augusta is still pursuing a potential Park and Ride Facility. Details are being worked out regarding a four-acre parcel that SCDOT owns in the northwest quadrant of the I-20 – Exit 5 interchange. Funding has not been secured but a variety of sources are being explored including private industry. The preliminary design includes 200 parking spaces and two bus shelter shelters. This will be a low impact development with regard to storm drainage. SCE&G is prepared to donate solar fixtures for lighting. Bridgestone and SRS have indicated a willingness to use the facility for car pooling purposes. Cost estimate including landscaping, curb and gutter is currently \$800,000. Piecing all of the funding sources together with the matches is going to be a challenge. Private funding may be used for maintenance due to certain tax breaks available for the businesses participating

This is an early action compact type project that would help offset some of the issues EPA might have regarding air quality. Bus bike racks could also be considered an early action compact action as well.

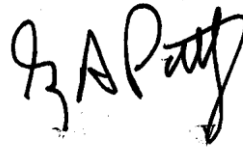
#### **(b) Richmond County**

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. An Air Quality Stakeholders meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2010 at the SCE&G Misty Lakes Recreation Facility in North Augusta. The stakeholders are comprised of government, business and economic development representatives. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the revised air quality standards and work toward finding solutions to our air quality issues.

On January 6, 2010, EPA proposed to strengthen the national ambient air quality standards for ground level ozone, the main component of smog. The proposed revisions are based on scientific evidence about ozone and its effects on people and the environment. EPA is proposing to strengthen the 8-hour "primary" ozone standard and to establish a seasonal "secondary" standard for ground level ozone. Public meetings were held February 2 and 4, 2010 in Virginia, Texas and California. There will be excepting comments for 60 days following these meetings. Final standards will be issued by August 31, 2010. The States will make recommendations for areas to be designated by January 2011. EPA will make final area designations by July 2011 and the designations will become effective by August 2011. State Implementation Plans outlining how states will reduce pollution to meet the standards are due to EPA by December 2013. States are required to meet the primary standard with deadlines depending on the severity of the problem.

Mr. DeCamp stated that at various levels there has been talk about Early Action Compact being used again this time around. The general impression is EPD is reluctant to allow Early Action Compacts again.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GAPatty".

George A. Patty  
Project Director